




RESEARCH PAPER



Knowledge, attitude, perception of Muslim parents towards vaccination in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is a predominant Muslim country and the recent surge in vaccine-preventable disease enticed us to conduct a survey to measure the Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of Muslim parents toward vaccination process. The data were collected under four segments such as demography, Knowledge, Attitude and Perception. The questionnaire had high internal consistency (0.823) for Cronbach's alpha. The sociodemographic determinants such as marital status (OR = 1.12; 0.91–1.38; $p < .05$), education level (college OR = 1.35; 1.12–1.64; $p < .05$, secondary OR = 1.22; 1.01–1.47; $p < .05$) and the occupation of parents (OR = 1.25; 1.07–1.45; $p < .05$) were observed affecting the Knowledge score significantly. Majority of Malaysian Muslim parents believed that "vaccine is not prohibited in Islam" and most of them also rejected the belief that "all vaccines are non halal and hence should be avoided". None of the socio-demographic determinants significantly affected the Attitude and Perception score of the Muslim parents. It was observed that the Attitude and Perception score did not establish any association with any of the socio-demographic determinants and hence the null hypothesis that Malaysian Muslim parents had positive Attitude and good Perception toward vaccination process was accepted.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 27 May 2020
Revised 27 June 2020
Accepted 19 July 2020

KEYWORDS

Malaysian; Muslim; knowledge; attitude; perception; association; regression

Introduction

Recent incidence of child death in Malaysia due to vaccine-preventable diseases particularly diphtheria and measles is matter of serious concern for child health and safety. It is undoubtedly a very unbecoming Attitude of parents toward vaccination.¹ The Malaysian vaccination schedule was launched in the early 1950s. Vaccines were provided free of cost in all government hospitals and clinics. Despite such global success and increased life expectancy, it is believed that vaccines are still not properly administered in Malaysia especially in rural areas, and mostly among Malays Muslims. It is believed that the lack of Knowledge and parental misperceptions toward vaccination may be the major barriers for low vaccination coverage especially in the rural areas. Studies have shown that the government has been largely successful in increasing the vaccination coverage by hosting immunization program, the program was to ensure that the parents were imparted adequate Knowledge and understanding for vaccines. There is enough literature to envisage that the knowledge and belief of parents greatly drive the vaccination process of their kids.² Numerous studies have been conducted to unearth the reasons as to why the parents especially the Muslims refuse, delay or hesitate to vaccinate their children. Among all, one of the most pertinent factors cited among Muslim parents is the religious and personal beliefs that source of the vaccine may not be *halal*. The major reason for this belief may be that the vaccine may have some components from pork. Government in Malaysia has

organized forums and talks to eliminate this belief and have encouraged parents to vaccinate their children. Although good coverage of Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus (DPT) has been reported but still minor cases do emerge warranting to check the Attitude and Perception of Muslim parents in Malaysia.³ It is envisaged that the parents will ensure the health and wellbeing of their children, and hence vaccination should be considered an important aspect to ensure that the children are safe from many fatal diseases.⁴ However, for few notable reasons such as poor knowledge, and halal factor may still lead to refusal and hesitancy of few parents toward childhood vaccination in Malaysia. This may cause an increase of vaccine-preventable diseases especially in Muslim families. The aim of this present study is to examine the Knowledge, Attitude and Perception (KAP) of Malaysian Muslim parents toward vaccination process. The study will also examine the possible reason for vaccine hesitancy, if any among the Malaysian Muslim parents toward vaccination process.

Methods

This is a descriptive, explorative cross-sectional study among Malaysian Muslims parents. The study was conducted for 3 months from 1st March 2019 to 31st May 2019. The participants selected were Muslims who had children irrespective of their marital status and ethnicity. The participations of the respondents were voluntary as they did not receive any incentive, awards or